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ABSTRACT

This feature issue on inclusion and school restructuring for students with and without disabilities contains the following articles: (1) "The 7 Habits for Educators" (Terri Vandercook); (2) "The Evolution of Inclusive Education" (Jennifer York-Barr and Terri Vandercook); (3) "Creating Inclusive Schools: What Does the Research Say?" (Margaret J. McLaughlin et al.); (4) "Overcoming Barriers to Creating Inclusive Schools" (Virginia Roach); (5) "Cooperative Teaching: A Strategy for Successful Inclusion" (Jeanne Bauwens and Jack J. Hourcade); (6) "Facilitating Learning in Heterogeneous Classrooms" (Mary A. Falvey and Christine C. Givner); (7) "One School's Journey to Full Inclusion" (Richard Schattman and Linda Pearo); (8) "Building an Inclusive High School Community" (John Emerson and M. Lewis Putnam); (9) "Youth Leadership for Equity and Excellence in Schools" (Carol Tashie et al.); (10) "'Together We're Better': Statewide Systems Change" (Laura Medwetz and John Sauer); and (11) "Zero Exclusion: Keeping Students in School" (Martha L. Thurlow et al.). An annotated list of 11 books, manuals, reports, and training/curriculum materials completes the issue. (DB)

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INSTITUTE ON COMMUNITY INTEGRATION
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Feature Issue on Inclusion and School Restructuring **Volume 9 (2) Spring 1996**

The *7 Habits* for Educators

by Terri Vandercook

As an educator, do you often feel overwhelmed by the many "opportunities" afforded educators these days: new curriculum, new instructional approaches, site based management, graduation standards, service learning, a call for increased involvement with families and the community, and the inclusion of children with unique learning needs, just to name a few? Do you have a sense of trying to do too many things and not doing any of them very well? Are these challenges sometimes compounded by feelings of isolation and lack of control or power?

The benefits of a school's commitment to full inclusion can be seen in the experiences of students such as these kindergartners in the Chaska [Minnesota] Public Schools. See story on page 18.

The national bestseller by Stephen Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, has long been read in the business arena and is influencing how individuals and companies do their work. For the past five years, many educators in Minnesota have invested substantial time and energy in learning about the seven habits and considering their implications for educators and for our schools. In this article, a brief overview of the habits is provided, followed by descriptions and illustrations of three habits in action with educators. It is hoped that this introduction to the seven habits will offer a sense of encouragement related to the important task of being an effective educator (and human being!).

■ Overview of the Seven Habits

The seven habits of highly effective people as identified and discussed by Covey are: (1) *Be Proactive*, (2) *Begin with the End in Mind*, (3) *Put First Things First*, (4) *Think Win-Win*, (5) *Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood*, (6) *Synergize*, and (7) *Sharpen the Saw*. The first three habits focus on self-mastery, gaining perspectives and skills that help an individual to be personally more effective. The second three habits relate to interacting with others, understanding and being able to utilize concepts and skills that support an individual to be interpersonally

Habits, continued on page 22

From the Editors

In 1988, we published our first issue of *IMPACT* focusing on what was then referred to as *integrated education* – students with and without disabilities learning together. Three years later, we published a second issue with a similar focus, although the language had changed from *integrated* to *inclusive* education. We are now publishing this third feature issue, titled *Inclusion and School Restructuring* to reflect an expanded focus for inclusive schooling.

As we reflect on the past eight years, the changes seem extraordinary. Today, inclusion involves but has moved beyond the domain of special education. As individuals affiliated with the historically separate worlds of general and special education begin to join together in more substantial ways, they are learning about the many shared challenges involved in promoting the capacities of all children and youth. They are also learning that by sharing resources – people, commitment, money, and experiences – they can co-create more effective educational opportunities for more students. We hope that this *IMPACT* will both affirm and inform such collaborative efforts in creating schools that are inclusive and successful, in which excellence and equity are the dominant cultural norms.

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A publication of the Institute on Community Integration (UAP) and the Research and Training Center on Residential Services and Community Living, College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota. Dedicated to improving community services and social supports for persons with disabilities and their families.

The Evolution of Inclusive Education

by Jennifer York-Barr and Terri Vandercook

It is hard to believe that as recently as a decade ago the language of *inclusion* as it pertained to students with disabilities in public schools was unfamiliar or without much meaning to most educators and families. Today, articles about inclusion are featured in national magazines such as *U.S. News and World Report*, *McCall's*, *Sesame Street Parent*, and *Reader's Digest*. It is also the topical focus for entire issues of professional journals, such as *Educational Leadership*, *School Administrator*, *Phi Delta Kappan*, and *Remedial and Special Education*. In addition, there are literally hundreds, if not thousands, of books, manuals, videotapes, and other materials related to inclusion in education.

The realities of shrinking fiscal resources and expanding student diversity have given rise to issues that cut to the very core of our nation's explicit commitment to provide equitable educational opportunities for all children.

Not only have the quantity and sources of information about inclusion changed dramatically, so too have the content and context of the information. Initially, much of the literature emphasized success stories and descriptions of strategies that emerged from isolated local efforts to integrate more fully students with severe disabilities who, historically, had been excluded from mainstreamed educational opportunities. Individual families decided they did not want their children to grow up in a separate world, attending separate education programs, and these families persevered to create positive change for their children. It was these efforts that were talked and written about, and they became models for other parents, children, and schools.

Advocacy groups and professionals learned from and joined with many of the families in the effort to create more inclusive schooling opportunities. Federal and state education and disability grant monies became available to boost local capacities for inclusion. Nationally, there sprung up a multitude of local projects that demonstrated that students with severe disabilities could be successfully included in general education environments. The outcomes of these projects effectively challenged traditional philosophies of service provision.

New questions then emerged that were related to daily educational practice:

- Since students are with general educators for most, if not all, of the day, how can these classroom teachers be meaningfully included in the IEP process?
- If special educators are to work in the context of general education classrooms, what is the best way for them to learn more about the social and curricular expectations in those classrooms?
- What curricular and instructional modifications are necessary and who is responsible?
- How can teachers be supported to grow in their ability to work in collaborative ways?
- How must time be scheduled to support co-teaching and other approaches to shared instructional responsibility?
- If students with severe disabilities are realizing more inclusive educational opportunities, why aren't we also including students with more mild disabilities?

Questions also emerged in the policy arena, including:

- Can special educators and paraprofessionals work with students who do not have IEPs without experiencing financial repercussions?
- Can special educators work in cross-categorical models of support?
- Shouldn't general and special educators have more preparation for collaborative role expectations during their preservice training?
- If resources are to be shared, how can the needs of truly challenged students be protected?
- Ultimately, who is responsible for ensuring that educational needs are met?
- What supports are appropriate for those students who are potentially dangerous to themselves and others?
- If partnerships between general and special educators are required to effectively meet the needs of students in classes, how do school schedules need to be constructed to support planning and teaching together?

The realities of shrinking fiscal resources and expanding student diversity have given rise to issues that cut to the very core of our nation's explicit commitment to provide equitable educational opportunities for all children. It is not uncommon to hear the following voiced:

- Who is advocating for the "typical" student?
- Where is the extra support for my child who is gifted?
- How can you justify an aide for that student who will never meet the graduation standards?
- Children with challenging behaviors have no right to be in classes in which they are disruptive!
- How can the teachers meet the needs of so many diverse learners?

These questions reflect a new era for *education*, not just *special* education. Will our educational communities choose to share resources *and* responsibility for all students? Or will we "circle the wagons" and divide into camps? Will we ultimately experience and understand that in diminishing any child's educational opportunities, we diminish the strength of a community? Are the values and commitments in place in our local communities that are requisites for the mutual trust and respect necessary for effective collaboration?

Johnson and Pugach (1996) suggest that a new and substantially different wave of collaboration is emerging: "...special educators must expand efforts to include reforming the broader educational system so that it is increasingly responsive to diversity...a collaborative orientation in which all members of the schools work together and are collectively accountable for the program of all students" (p. 201). As inclusive schooling opportunities and efforts expand, authentic teaching and learning partnerships are emerging between many general and special educators. General educators are learning that they too can meaningfully contribute to the education of students with disabilities. Special educators are learning that they have much to contribute to many students in classrooms, not just those with identified special education labels. It is increasingly apparent in many school communities that the opportunity to better support all students can be realized when creative, talented, and committed teachers join together to get to know students and families, to share experiences and perspectives, and to create new and flexible instructional designs in today's extremely diverse classrooms.

It is increasingly apparent in many school communities that the opportunity to better support all students can be realized when creative, talented, and committed teachers join together to...create new and flexible instructional designs in today's extremely diverse classrooms.

Inclusion, for many of us, has expanded to be both a process and outcome of an effective education. Inclusion means providing equal educational opportunity by co-creating learning communities in which unique needs and diverse capacities are recognized, understood, accepted, and valued. It is about meaningful collaboration and professional growth for the varied educational service providers who have previously worked in relative isolation from one another. It is about attempting to create positive social change through education experiences. Mandated public education has been purportedly about equity and social justice. Has it really been about that, and will it be about that in the future?

There have been, unfortunately, many instances of efforts referred to as inclusion that fell short of expectations. Physical proximity is only an initial essential step toward realizing an inclusive learning opportunity. Without explicit attention and support to both social and curricular aspects of inclusion, positive learning and growth will not occur, for any of the students. Without explicit attention and support to educators as they join together, the opportunities of inclusion will not be realized.

Increasing complexity and diversity, combined with diminishing resources, have created a crisis in public schooling. As with most crises, both challenges and opportunities emerge. Each of us chooses our perspective and response. Some will choose the status quo and wait to move into action until more resources are made available – which is likely to be a very long wait. Some will choose to advocate persistently and, hopefully, convincingly for more resources, which is an important position for long-term change. Some will choose to do things differently with the resources currently available, which is a pragmatic position within an immediate circle of influence. In the words of Dr. Tom Skrtic, Professor of Education at the University of Kansas, "Out of chaos and confusion can emerge defensiveness and isolation, or mutual collaboration." Fortunately, many educators, community members, social service partners, and families are choosing to collaborate in the important work of educational and social change.

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Reference: Johnson, L., & Pugach, M. (1996). The emerging third wave of collaboration: Beyond problem-solving. In W. Stainback and S. Stainback (Eds.) *Controversial issues confronting special education: Divergent perspectives* (pp.197-204). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Creating Inclusive Schools: What Does the Research Say?

by Margaret J. McLaughlin, Sandra H. Warren, and Patricia F. Schofield

As the momentum to create inclusive schools and classrooms has swelled and our insight about these schools has deepened, there is an increased need to examine the research on inclusion. In fact, some of the most commonly asked questions about inclusion are, "What does the research say? What happens to students in inclusive classrooms? Do parents and teachers like it? What does inclusion cost?". The answers to these and similar questions are not immediately evident, nor will they be easy questions to answer. Yet, an emerging research base is suggesting some positive trends as well as pointing to important issues for future research.

As the momentum to create inclusive schools and classrooms has swelled and our insight about these schools has deepened, there is an increased need to examine the research on inclusion.

Before we review selected findings, we will examine some of the issues involved in conducting research on inclusion. First is the definition of inclusion. The literature suggests many definitions. Some define inclusion in terms of placement by calling for the education of students with disabilities "side-by-side" with nondisabled peers. Others define inclusion in terms of a systemic change that alters the organization of general and special education programs and resources. There is "full inclusion" and "partial inclusion." Schools vary widely in how they define and implement inclusion. These variations are rarely made clear in the existing research. The context of the intervention called "inclusion" is not well known. Descriptions of inclusion in the research literature may note that teachers are collaborating, but we don't know whether the collaboration or co-teaching is supported by an overall school commitment to inclusion or whether these are isolated ad hoc arrangements.

Another complicating factor is the diversity represented by students in inclusive classrooms. Research tends to focus on a single student or a group of students with similar disability designations. Often overlooked in the research is the broader context of the classroom and the learner needs and resources in the heterogeneous classroom. The experiences and achievements of students with disabilities or other learning problems have not been well documented or evaluated. This leads doubters to say, "This is all very nice, but I bet it can't work in my class!" In short, the available research is very uneven with respect to context. Rich descriptions of the context of the inclusive classroom are essential to make meaning of the existing research and to validate effective practices. Despite these problems, there are preliminary findings to be shared from the research on inclusion.

■ Impact of Inclusion on Students

A wide range of methodologies have been used to examine the impacts of inclusive education on the academic and social knowledge and skills of students. These methodologies include meta-analysis, IEP goal reviews, observations, interviews, and the use of standardized or norm-referenced instruments. In addition, a wide range of skills and abilities have been explored. Some studies have focused on very narrow skills as their indicators of success while others have looked at changes in a number of skill areas. Findings from these varied studies suggest that, in general, students with widely varying disabilities supported in inclusive settings may do as well as or better than their peers supported in separate classrooms. However, these findings are not definitive across all disability areas or all academic areas. For example, some research involving students with learning disabilities has indicated that a certain number of such students may not make academic gains within general education classrooms despite extensive interventions. Findings about the improvement in social interactions and communication skills in inclusive classrooms are consistently positive related to students with more significant developmental disabilities. Finally, there is no evidence of negative impact on students without disabilities; in fact, several studies have shown the positive impact on these students in areas such as developing responsibility and positive attitudes about diversity.

A good deal of research has been conducted to identify practices that support inclusion and their impacts on classrooms. The key finding of these studies is that inclusion requires collaboration between general and special educators...

■ Research on Effective Practices

A good deal of research has been conducted to identify practices that support inclusion and their impacts on classrooms. The key finding of these studies is that inclusion

requires collaboration between general and special educators and regularly scheduled time to plan instruction. An important finding is that most, if not all, accommodations and supports seem to be able to be provided in general education classrooms when adequate resources exist. Much of the responsibility and expectation for making individualized accommodations and planning for students with disabilities is assumed by the special educators.

■ Stakeholder Perceptions and Attitudes

There is an emerging research base that has examined the perceptions of key participants: school staff, families, and students involved in inclusion. Researchers have used interviews, surveys, and focus groups to investigate these attitudes and perceptions. Some of the earlier studies found that teachers and other school staff expressed concern and frustration over the amount of time involved in collaborative planning, developing curriculum modifications, and orchestrating social interactions. School staff also had concerns about their level of knowledge about inclusion. More recent studies have indicated that as parents and teachers have more experience with inclusion, they report more beneficial aspects. Teachers who have had students with disabilities in their classes develop more positive attitudes toward these students and increase their expectations for achievement of the students. Teachers also report learning new skills and gaining confidence in teaching the students, as well as experiencing greater collegial support and less isolation in their changing roles.

Findings from recent studies of parent attitudes are more encouraging regarding parents' perceptions of the positive academic, behavioral, and social outcomes in inclusive classrooms, but parents continue to be concerned about physical and psychological safety issues. Some research indicates that parents of nondisabled students are initially skeptical about the impact of inclusion, fearing that it will "take away from" their child's achievement. With experience, some general education parents report feeling positively about the social and academic benefits for their children and the increased support in the general education classroom.

■ The Costs of Inclusion

A frequently asked question is, "What are the costs of inclusion?" Several studies, including at least two statewide evaluations, are providing insight about the costs of inclusion. Generally, this research suggests that inclusion can cost more at the beginning. Increased costs are reported in areas such as personnel (particularly increased hiring of paraprofessionals), professional development, and renovating school buildings to make them accessible. Sometimes additional lift-equipped or other specially equipped vans need to be purchased. But, most of the costs are one-time expenditures required during the transition to more inclusive services, and can be offset by tuition savings when students return from high cost private schools or other out-of-district placements or from decreased transportation costs for those students who can ride the regular school buses. The increase in the numbers of paraprofessionals hired to support individual students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms does seem to be a long-term and potentially increasing cost in many school districts. Some school districts more experienced with inclusion are beginning to examine how these individuals can most effectively support the inclusion of students in the life of the classroom and are creating ways to "fade" the support of paraprofessionals to individual students and expand support to all students.

The research does suggest that effective inclusion must be carefully crafted for individual students and classrooms, and that thoughtful evaluation of practice and policy will provide the necessary base for continuing the evolution of effective practices for all students.

■ Summary

The research base at this time consists of isolated studies with varied students and settings. As yet, there are no definitive answers to the many questions posed. The research points to benefits as well as challenges for effective practice. There is a need for large-scale studies that can consider the many factors that contribute to effective inclusion. What this review cannot do is capture the many anecdotes and positive experiences of students, families, and schools. The research does suggest that effective inclusion must be carefully crafted for individual students and classrooms, and that thoughtful evaluation of practice and policy will provide the necessary base for continuing the evolution of effective practices for all students.

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Overcoming Barriers to Creating Inclusive Schools

by Virginia Roach

While some policymakers continue to ask "*should* we promote inclusion?", practitioners across the country are asking "*how* should we promote inclusion?". As practitioners increasingly grapple with issues associated with implementing inclusion, common themes, concerns, and solutions have emerged that can provide guidance to building administrators, teachers, and family members. This article will discuss a few of the common barriers cited by building administrators and some of the creative approaches that their colleagues have used to overcome these obstacles to including students with disabilities in the general education program. While administrators cite varying barriers to implementing inclusion, many of their concerns generally fall into the following four major categories: (1) initiating inclusion, (2) professional development, (3) scheduling and staffing, and (4) responding to state and district testing and accountability programs.

■ Initiating Inclusion

Many building administrators are concerned with how to initiate inclusion in their schools. Concerns range from how to discuss inclusion with parents of general education students, to convincing general education teachers to "take in" students with disabilities, to convincing special education teachers to "let go" of "their" students. Principals often ask how to determine which students and teachers should start inclusion in the building. The simple answer to these questions is that there is no universal answer; the solution depends on the specific school culture, teachers within the school, parental concerns and expectations, and the community in which the school operates. Some approaches, however, have been successful across districts.

First, initiating inclusion in a school building requires an enormous amount of communication among teachers, families, students, and building administrators. Principals in successful inclusive schools typically hold parent and community forums and dedicate several staff meetings to the topic before they implement school-wide programs of inclusion. The purpose of these forums is for participants to have an opportunity to ask questions, air concerns, and have their questions and concerns understood and addressed. Forums are successful when school officials listen and respond to comments in order to plan appropriately, rather than present completed plans to the school community.

Second, principals and teachers alike report that inclusion that begins with teacher volunteers, before moving to mandatory participation by all teachers, seems to reduce teacher resistance (where it exists). Principals note that those teachers most resistant to inclusion may be those teachers who least understand inclusion. In many instances, allowing hesitant teachers ample opportunity to observe inclusive classrooms helps to show them that their instructional techniques, classroom organization, and behavior management mechanisms may need little adaptation for the newly included student. In addition, observing inclusive classes shows special educators specifically how they can work within the general education environment.

Some school districts phase-in inclusion very gradually, while others rapidly convert the entire district within a few years. The method of phasing-in inclusion in a particular district depends on how inclusion was initiated, but need not shape the type of support teachers and parents receive. For example, if inclusion begins because a child is included as the result of a hearing officer's decision, too often the district thereafter will implement inclusion on a case-by-case basis and will not take a systemic approach to including all eligible students in the general program. In contrast, successful administrators have used such opportunities to begin establishing school-wide structures to support children in the general classroom, such as conducting MAPS (McGill Action Planning System) sessions, developing block schedules on a school-wide basis, and creating "circle of friends" support systems for students. In this way, the first included student becomes a positive example for the faculty of how to change the structure of the school to support inclusion, and hence paves the way for the inclusion of other students.

■ Professional Development

The key to successful inclusion is opportunities for professional development for teachers. Successful inclusion efforts generally include four types of teacher development:

- **Site visits for teachers to inclusive schools and classrooms**. Through such visits teachers can gain a picture of what inclusion is. In addition, receiving teachers will often observe a child in his or her special education class to gain some understanding of the student prior to placement in the regular classroom.
- **Situation-specific problem solving sessions**. In these sessions, building teachers work together to identify needed resources and strategies to meet the needs of students in their classes. Principals in successful inclusion schools often restructure their faculty meetings so that the bulk of the time is spent addressing teacher concerns about individual students and classroom strategies. Other principals restructure their schools' daily schedules to provide an opportunity for faculty to meet every day to discuss strategies and problem-solving. Still other principals have

created site teams at each school, composed of parents and teachers who jointly problem-solve and make recommendations on the training needs of the staff. In all of these instances, principals emphasize that any student may be the subject of teacher problem-solving, not just those who are receiving special education services.

- **Development opportunities focused on instructional strategies and adapting curriculum to use with diverse learners.** In addition to this opportunity, administrators in inclusive schools and districts report the importance of providing opportunities for teachers to learn about effective classroom and behavior management strategies.
- **Development opportunities that support the change process in general**. Although less common, some principals arrange for inspirational speakers and experts on the change process to help staff understand and cope with the stress and anxiety connected with restructuring schools and working with diverse student populations. These support sessions are described as "care for the caregivers."

■ Scheduling and Staffing

Many principals worry about how to schedule special education teachers so that they are not hectically running from one class to another to provide in-class support for students with IEPs. Successful principals have found that creating a building-wide block schedule for all teachers and related service personnel, in collaboration with the faculty, provides the needed checks and balances to the schedule to ensure that students' instructional needs are being met, while not placing an undue burden on any one professional in the building. Assignments should be made so that all classroom teachers in a given grade level have a range of diversity represented in the students in their classes. Then, all specialists, teachers, and related service personnel should be deployed across the schedule as needed. For instance, if an additional teacher is needed to provide reading support in a particular class, the support may be provided by either the reading specialist, the learning disabilities resource teacher, or the "self-contained" special education teacher assigned to the school. Teachers are assigned flexibly based on need, rather than based on their designated "labels" and those of the students. Classroom teachers also adjust their daily classroom schedules to allow teachers to be assigned in longer "blocks," rather than switching classrooms each 30-50 minute period.

■ Testing and Accountability Programs

A fourth area of concern for building principals is whether and how to include students with disabilities in testing and accountability programs. Over the past decade, states have increasingly required students to take statewide assessments at specific points in their school careers. Often, schools and districts are evaluated, or compared to other districts, on the median test scores of their students. Over the past five years there has been a significant increase in the rewards and sanctions that state departments of education can apply to districts based on student test scores. Principals planning for inclusion wonder if students with disabilities will be included in the testing process. Principals also worry that if these students are included their test scores will bring down the median school scores. In addition, teachers worry that they will be evaluated based on their students' scores.

Many inclusion principals note that many students with IEPs actually score higher on standardized tests than some of their non-labeled peers. The designation of a disability alone does not predestine a student to perform poorly on such tests. In addition, research has shown that not only does inclusion have no negative impact on the achievement of the general school population, it can have a *positive* impact on student achievement. This is because teachers in inclusive schools are much more attuned to the individual needs of all students as they seek to meet the needs of students with identified disabilities in their classrooms. Teachers in successful inclusion classrooms often are more adept at presenting materials in multiple formats to capitalize on the learning strengths of students. Some states and districts are requiring each school to report the test scores of all of the students that live in the school's catchment area, *regardless of where they go to school*. These types of policies further create a level "playing field" when it comes to assessment and accountability. Principals caution policymakers that under no circumstances should state and district policies force local administrators to choose between "looking good" and providing students with disabilities access to the general education curriculum and program through inclusion.

■ Conclusion

In recent years the debate about inclusion has shifted from *should* students be included in the general program to *how* should students be included in the general program. The ease with which principals are able to implement inclusion seems to be related to how systemic the move to inclusion is in their state, district, and school. That is, in those schools where inclusion is a philosophy that undergirds the entire educational program, issues associated with initiating inclusion, teacher training, staffing and scheduling, and student assessment and accountability are handled in a fashion that benefits all students, not just those with disabilities.

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Cooperative Teaching: A Strategy for Successful Inclusion

by Jeanne Bauwens and Jack J. Hourcade

Perhaps the single most dramatic development in American education over the past decade is the fast-emerging consensus that the traditional educational structure of the schools – that is, one teacher teaching and responsible for only one group of students – is inadequate for today and will be even more inadequate tomorrow. This traditional approach to instruction, based as it is on the implicit assumption of a homogeneous student population, is ineffective in a school system that is increasingly diverse.

■ Restructuring the "Lonely Profession"

Most proposals to make the general education classroom more responsive to the greater range of student instructional needs involve rethinking how school professionals work. Historically, teaching has been a "lonely profession", with teachers working in nearly total isolation from each other. How do schools move away from teaching as a "lonely profession"? The most promising alternative is the establishment of professional collaborative relationships between teachers. This requires restructuring the present model of instruction such that general educators and specialists (e.g., special educators, speech therapists) develop a common understanding of learning opportunities and demands in heterogeneous classrooms and share instructional responsibilities for diverse groups of students. One way to effectively structure professional roles and responsibilities is *cooperative teaching*.

Cooperative teaching involves a fundamental rethinking of the traditional one teacher-one classroom arrangement. In cooperative teaching, two (or more) educators possessing distinct sets of skills work in a coordinated fashion to teach academically heterogeneous groups of students jointly in the general education classroom (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995, p. 46). A general educator and an instructional specialist (e.g., a special education teacher, ESL teacher, school psychologist, etc.) are present simultaneously in the general education classroom for at least part of the instructional day. The essential philosophy undergirding such an arrangement is that *all educators are responsible for all students*.

■ The Five Cooperative "P's"

As more schools are implementing cooperative teaching, greater knowledge and insight are being gained. The experience of two educators working side-by-side in a general education classroom generates a novel professional relationship for most participants. Through our work with school personnel initiating effective cooperative teaching programs, we have identified five key elements that are essential to a fully developed and maximally effective cooperative teaching arrangement. We refer to these elements as the *Five Cooperative "P's"*, and they are described as follows:

- **Cooperative Presence**. Many educators begin what they believe to be cooperative teaching by simply being together in the classroom at the same time. *Cooperative presence* is a necessary but insufficient element for true cooperative teaching. In the absence of other key elements (especially cooperative planning), cooperative presence generates little structural change. Under such an arrangement many special services providers report that they "feel like an aide."
- **Cooperative Planning.** *Cooperative planning* involves two educators meeting regularly to collaboratively design and prepare unit and lesson plans, to differentiate specific roles and responsibilities, and to identify the resources they need. In these meetings, which typically work best if scheduled every week to two weeks, a clear sense of professional equality must be established between the two participants. It is important to distinguish between cooperative planning and *parallel planning*. Parallel planning, often observed in the early stages of a school's attempts to adopt an inclusion philosophy, is characterized by both teachers focusing on the same curricular areas as they plan together. However, in parallel planning each teacher plans for only one subgroup of the students (e.g., the general educator plans only for the typical students, while the special services provider plans for the students with special needs). Such an approach fails to provide the integrated educational coordination necessary for maximizing instructional effectiveness.
- **Cooperative Presenting**. *Cooperative presenting* refers to the establishment of instructional equivalence in the relative weight of the professional roles each educator assumes in the general education classroom. This is in stark contrast to a cooperative presence, in which the roles and contributions of the two typically are not perceived as equivalent. Unless controlled for beforehand through careful cooperative planning, it is not unusual for the educational support provider (e.g., special educator, bilingual educator) to perceive himself/herself to be secondary, if not superfluous, in that classroom, with the general educator still delivering most of the instruction. In such situations, neither the underlying philosophy of cooperative teaching nor its maximal instructional effectiveness are realized. The key is to identify specific instructional tasks that can be accomplished only when two school professionals are present simultaneously and then base the cooperative teaching approach around those.

- **Cooperative Processing**. *Cooperative processing* refers to the necessity for the two participants in cooperative teaching to be constantly monitoring and evaluating their cooperative teaching and its results. This requires thorough reflection and ongoing mutual debriefing. Cooperative processing works best as an integral part of cooperative planning. This ongoing analysis component must evaluate at least two dimensions of cooperative teaching. First, the educators must be concerned with the total effectiveness of their cooperative teaching; that is, how efficiently and effectively content and instruction are being delivered. Secondly, and equally important (though an unfamiliar task for most educators), the two must also continually evaluate the quality of their professional relationship. This involves actively considering their independent and mutual commitments to their new relationships with each other and with their students. It is important to recognize the interpersonal dynamics of an evolving teaching partnership. This represents a significant change in practice for most teachers who are used to working autonomously and must now learn to make collaborative decisions.
- **Cooperative Problem-Solving.** The paradigm shift inherent in moving into cooperative teaching makes the appearance of problems inevitable. With this in mind, in cooperative teaching the two participants must be able to engage in *cooperative problem-solving*, which includes defining the problem, brainstorming possible solutions, selecting a solution that appears to best address the problem, planning who will do what in the solution, and implementing and evaluating the solution.

■ Conclusion

In the infancy of cooperative teaching 10 years ago, early practitioners believed intuitively in the power of collaboration. However, they often struggled to identify the specific components and strategies most likely to maximize the strength of two education professionals working together. After a decade of extensive research and practice, cooperative teaching clearly has demonstrated itself to be an impressively powerful instructional strategy for providing success for students with special needs in general education classrooms. This success is due in large part to accurate analysis and determination of these fundamental components most necessary for effective cooperative teaching. Teacher knowledge and mastery of these components is a prerequisite to successful implementation of cooperative teaching.

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Reference: Bauwens, J., & Hourcade, J. J. (1995). *Cooperative teaching: Rebuilding the schoolhouse for all students.* Austin, TX: PRO-ED.

Inclusion Materials from the Institute on Community Integration

The following materials are available from the Publications Office, Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. For additional information, including cost, contact the office at 612/624-4512.

- **Lessons for Inclusion** (1993). A K-4 curriculum designed to assist educators in developing caring classroom communities in which all children are valued members.
- **Community Connections** (1993). A 36-lesson curriculum that facilitates positive relationships, communication, and a sense of community among students during advisory period or homeroom in middle school.
- **Yes I Can Program** (1996). A 20-lesson junior and senior high school curriculum designed to bring together students with and without disabilities for instructional and experiential activities focusing on friendship, disability, and overcoming barriers to social inclusion.
- **Dropout Prevention Series** (1996). Six publications from collaborative dropout prevention research conducted by the University of Minnesota, University of Washington, and University of California-Santa Barbara. The publications include summaries of research findings, descriptions of intervention strategies, case studies, and policy issues. Titles include:

  Staying in School: Strategies for Middle School Students with Learning and Emotional Disabilities

  Relationship Building and Affiliation Activities in School Based Dropout Prevention Programs

  Tip the Balance: Practices and Policies that Influence School Engagement for Youth at Risk for Dropping Out

  Dropout Prevention Resource Document: Interventions to Support Junior High Students at Highest Risk for Dropping Out of School

  Check and Connect: A Dropout Prevention Procedure for Keeping Kids in School

  PACT Manual: Parent and Community Teams for School Success

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Facilitating Learning in Heterogeneous Classrooms

by Mary A. Falvey and Christine C. Givner

Heterogeneous groups of students make up classrooms throughout the country. Traditional instructional approaches in which teachers stand in front of the class and lecture, doing most of the talking while students passively listen and perhaps take notes, are rarely effective in creating instructional environments that truly educate and motivate all students. Fortunately, this outdated, one-size-fits-all instructional approach is being replaced with instruction that is appropriate for a variety of learning styles, that is interactive, and that motivates learners. The newer approaches to instruction, in which diversity is not only recognized but valued and affirmed, are the most likely to be successful in teaching all students, including those who have labels such as "disabled", "at risk", and "difficult to teach." In this article, we will briefly describe three of many models being used to create more effective instruction in heterogeneous classrooms: *multiple intelligences, individual accommodations,* and *multi-level instruction.*

■ Multiple Intelligences

Effective implementation of multiple teaching strategies increases the likelihood that all students can access meaningful learning experiences. The Multiple Intelligence Theory originated by Howard Gardner (1983) and refined by Thomas Armstrong (1987, 1994), provides one useful framework for developing multiple teaching strategies. This model describes the range of abilities that people possess according to seven "intelligence" categories. It is important to note that each human being possesses all seven intelligences, with some intelligences more highly developed than others within each individual. Following are brief descriptions of the seven intelligences and respective instructional approaches best suited for each:

- **Linguistic Intelligence**. The capacity to use oral and/or written words effectively. Students who have strong *linguistic intelligence* are likely to benefit from traditional teaching strategies, such as lectures and note-taking. Educators can broaden students' learning in the area of linguistic intelligence through storytelling, brainstorming, use of tape recorders, journal writing; and publishing students' work (Armstrong, 1994).
- **Logical-Mathematical Intelligence**. The ability to effectively use numbers and to reason. Students with strong *logical-mathematical intelligence* have succeeded and excelled in traditional math and science classes. The following strategies can be used for developing logical-mathematical intelligence and enhancing learning by students for whom this is a strength across all subjects taught in school: the use of calculations, quantification, classifications, and categorizations; critical thinking and problem solving across all subjects (Armstrong, 1994).
- **Spatial Intelligence**. The capacity to accurately perceive the visual/spatial world and create internal mental images. Students with strong *spatial intelligence* readily respond to and learn information presented visually. The following strategies can be used to facilitate learning through spatial intelligence: giving students opportunities to create visualizations; using color cues on worksheets, chalkboards, textbooks and other printed material; developing and using pictorial metaphors of concepts; using drawings to create solutions or responses to questions across all areas of the curriculum; and having teachers use graphic symbols to represent concepts (Armstrong, 1994).
- **Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence**. The ability to skillfully move one's body and to move and manipulate objects. Students with strengths in *bodily-kinesthetic intelligence* learn and communicate through movement. This type of intelligence can be reinforced and activated when educators use a variety of gross motor activities, including: using body movements to answer questions (going beyond just students raising their hands); using the classroom as a theater to "act out" content in textbooks, problems, or other materials; pantomiming specific concepts; learning with "hands-on" materials; and using the body parts to create specific knowledge (Armstrong, 1994).
- **Musical Intelligence**. A sensitivity to and grasp of the elements of music. Students with strong *musical intelligence* are not necessarily gifted singers or musicians, but are likely to learn through rhythm. The following are ways to incorporate music into the entire curriculum: using rhythms, sounds, raps, and chants to teach concepts; using musical selections that represent or reflect the content of the curriculum; playing music in the background while teaching; and using musical selections to depict the events and feelings within a story or book (Armstrong, 1994).
- **Interpersonal Intelligence**. The capacity to perceive and distinguish moods, intentions, and feelings of others. Students with strong *interpersonal intelligence* are often described as outgoing and empathic. The following activities are suggested for teaching approaches that incorporate interactions among students: peer sharing of materials and responsibilities; having students construct sculptures of concepts using the students; using cooperative groupings; using games to teach and/or reinforce concepts; and using simulations to learn about events, feelings, alternative strategies for behaving (Armstrong, 1994).

- **Intrapersonal Intelligence**. The ability to know one's self and act on the basis of that knowledge. *Intrapersonal intelligence* is manifested in students who are more likely to learn when given the opportunity to learn on their own. The following activities are suggested for incorporating intrapersonal intelligence into daily routines: using reflection activities; connecting the curriculum to students' personal lives and/or future experiences; giving students choices of what to do, when, and how; and encouraging students to express their feelings (Armstrong, 1994).

■ Individual Accommodations

In order to learn, some students will need more specific assistance than what is provided by multiple instructional strategies. *Accommodations* are individualized supports that promote access to learning without modifying expectations for the student. Schools are required to provide accommodations in order to facilitate students' access to learning. Common accommodations include extending the time for students with learning disabilities to take tests, providing students with instruction in their first language when they are not proficient in English, and using adaptive devices for students with physical disabilities. The methods for evaluating performance when a student has been provided with accommodations should in no way penalize the student because of the use of an accommodation. For example, if a student uses a computer to answer test questions while other students hand write their responses, no reference should be made to the computer when calculating that student's grade.

Accommodations can involve providing students with additional supports. Personal supports can range from periodic checks on a student, to continuous support for a specific activity (e.g., supporting personal care needs in the restroom), to continuous support across all activities. When some students make transitions from year to year, one service delivery model to another, or one school to another, additional supports might be needed. Personal supports can be provided by same-age or older peers, special or general education teachers, related service personal, instructional or health care assistants, volunteers, or administrators.

Accommodations should be provided to students only when it is necessary to facilitate their access to the learning process. As their skills become more proficient and the need for the accommodations lessens, accommodations should be faded and, if possible, eliminated. There are some students who will always require particular accommodations; such accommodations should not be faded, but rather be updated and modified as the curriculum and student needs dictate. When accommodations are provided, care should be taken to assist students in their use in such a way that the students are physically, socially, and emotionally included in all activities. This may require giving all students the opportunity to use an accommodation to reduce any mystery about it.

■ Multi-Level Instruction

Occasionally a student, even with the presence of multiple teaching strategies and accommodations, is still unable to access the curriculum in a meaningful way, and so alternatives are necessary. Alternative strategies are often referred to as *multi-level instruction*. In multi-level instruction, students are provided with individualized supports in order to facilitate their access to learning, and the expectations for the students are modified. Multi-level instruction provides students opportunities to participate, even if only partially. Multi-level instruction should be designed for an individual student. It can include teaching the same curriculum at a less complex level; teaching the same curriculum with functional application to daily routines or life; teaching the same curriculum, but reducing the performance standards; teaching the same curriculum at a slower pace; and teaching a different but related curriculum. Teachers must remember that multi-level instruction should be attempted in a manner that ensures the least obtrusive modification possible is made for each student. There will be students who have such enduring learning needs that certain adaptations and/or modifications must be made to structure the learning task for student success. Such adaptations and/or modifications should not be used unless absolutely necessary and they should be faded as soon as possible.

■ Conclusion

A variety of tools and strategies to facilitate the learning of diverse students in heterogeneous classrooms and schools have been described in this article. Still, there are no easy recipes or formulas. Each educator must develop his or her own style of teaching as scientist, artist, and decision-maker, broadening the repertoire of instructional tactics, and making learning accessible to and motivating for all students in our classrooms.

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One School's Journey to Full Inclusion

by Richard Schattman and Linda Pearo

Full inclusion has been referred to as the centerpiece of special education reform in the 1980s and 1990s. Ironically, it is often discussed exclusive of reform in general education. Changes in special education must be inextricably linked to reform and restructuring in general education if either is to succeed. Swanton Elementary School's journey to become a fully inclusive school is one example of how reform in special education can be linked to restructuring efforts in general education.

Swanton Elementary is an elementary school with 625 students in rural northwest Vermont. The school's exploration of inclusive special education began in 1980, and a fully inclusive approach was implemented in 1986. For the past 10 years, there have been no self-contained special education classes or resource rooms; children are supported through a non-categorical continuum of services in general education classes and in the community. These special education support services include supplemental professional and paraprofessional instruction and related services (speech, language, psychological, occupational therapy, etc.), consultation, and direct instruction of students in the general education setting. All special education services are supplemental and complement a range of other educational options that are part of any student's program.

Swanton's journey to full inclusion continues to evolve. Through a mixture of many adventures, exhilarating experiences, challenges, and yes, a few mistakes, much insight has been gleaned. Modifications continue to be made to meet the diverse and changing needs of our learning community.

■ Beginning the Journey

In 1980, the Swanton Elementary School began to consider Outcomes Based Education. As it did so, the need for the school to articulate a philosophy and mission became evident. Without a philosophical foundation, staff and parents had no guideposts for judging which ideas and innovations were worthy of our embrace and effort. After a year and a half of community conversations, a vision and mission emerged. The Swanton School Vision states:

> The Swanton School is a caring, responsible, respectful, community of learners. Our work is supported by inquiry and reflection, promotes personal integrity, citizenship, and lifelong learning.

The Swanton School Mission Statement says:

> The Swanton School community believes that given enough time and the appropriate instruction, students will achieve what is considered necessary to learn. We recognize that students arrive at school with differing backgrounds, influences, and needs. We are committed to the concepts of fairness and justice which reflect a concern for each individual's development, dignity, and growth potential. Approaches to discipline and social responsibility in our school will promote behavioral changes that empower students to understand their obligations to others as members of a democratic society.

Staff, parents, and other community members use the vision and mission statements as filters for our conversations about what we are doing, how effective our practices are, and what direction we might take next. Ideas consistent with the tenants of our vision and mission are given serious consideration and ones that conflict are soon abandoned. The vision has provided the school with a sense of continuity and direction, and along with our mission has led to changes in practice at the classroom and systems levels.

As our journey continued, Swanton Elementary shifted from a traditional "continuum of placements" model, where student's strengths and needs determined placement, to a "continuum of services model", where all children are in age-appropriate classes with a range of supports and accommodations. A number of specific strategies involving classroom teachers were used to implement the new model, including student planning teams, classroom accommodations, strategies for problem-solving, in-class paraprofessional support, and partnerships with parents.

While changes in classroom practices were critical to implementation of an inclusive approach, we have learned along the way the importance of systemic level change to sustain inclusive practices.

■ Systemic Changes

Much of the literature on inclusion has focused on the specific practices and strategies for supporting the individual educational, emotional, and physical needs of students in general education settings. While it is critical that a school develop and refine these support strategies, another level of *systemic innovations* are necessary for an inclusionary approach to succeed and endure. Systemic innovations are inclusive practices that become a part of the school culture. At Swanton, systemic change has focused on four areas:

- Refining a vision and mission
- Embracing shared leadership
- Developing a culture of inquiry
- Developing diverse and responsive classroom configurations

Vision and Mission

Early on, our vision and mission became catalysts for a discussion of the efficacy of the segregated educational practices that were characteristic of our approach at that time. Once there was consensus regarding Swanton's vision and mission, discrete practices were discussed. The practice of placing students in special education classes or in separate centers had to be reconsidered; if we said we believed that "...students will achieve what is essential to learn...", on what basis could we exclude them from regular classroom opportunities within their community school? It was our vision and mission that moved us forward with a systemic rather than fragmented process. Constant articulation of vision was essential to sustain a critical dialogue among all constituents regarding values, current practices, and our goals. We realized that such discourse was essential in a school that was striving to be a "community of learners."

Shared Leadership

Another essential ingredient for both full inclusion and broader systemic change has been shared leadership. Full inclusion has driven changes in practices, roles, and responsibilities. Shared leadership has meant that teachers, administrators, students, parents, and other community members have formal and informal opportunities to influence the changes. In Swanton's shared leadership model, every voice may not be heard on every issue, and every decision is not made at a committee, building, or task force level. But, collaborative approaches to decision making *are* used when the complexity or nature of the issue warrants. By ascribing to a shared leadership model, the potential for broad-based, creative approaches to planning and problem-solving is achieved.

Two specific ways that leadership has been shared are through the Design Team and task forces. The Design Team is comprised of community members, teachers, the school co-principals, the assistant superintendent, a student, a board member, and a parent. The team's responsibilities include assuring that school-wide decisions are consistent with the vision and mission, and supporting task force activities. Task forces take on responsibilities that include involving staff, students, and the community in developing goals consistent with the vision and mission; identifying measurable student outcome targets; developing action plans; and assessing progress. Task forces have focused on middle level education, literacy, technology, early education, social responsibility, and community collaboration.

Systemic Inquiry

This community of shared leadership has also become immersed in systemic inquiry. Considering current practices, goals, or targets that are examined in the context of our vision and mission has formed the basis for inquiry. We have shaped our discourse from questions that have constantly emerged in our journey. The process of inquiry implies actual research. This has created for us the necessary insight to examine variables in general education that would perhaps have been overlooked if we had adopted an inclusive model of special education in isolation. Inquiry, or "action research", has enabled us to enfranchise all stakeholders within our community of learners. To pose questions regarding fundamental practices, teachers need to trust, share, support, and collaborate. Within such a mindful culture, actions are taken with respect for the complexity of systemic change as we endeavor to address the interrelationship of the myriad of variables exposed when questions are posed.

Classroom Configurations

A final example of systemic change that has occurred is the development of a range of classroom configurations and placement and teaching options. As the character of our student body broadened as a result of our inclusive practices, a range of classroom options were needed. Traditional configurations, where one teacher taught one class, worked for some of our students but not all. By exploring other ways to configure classes, teachers, and resources, we have been able to create options that are better able to accommodate a broad range of needs in our student population. For example, many teachers saw a need to create a sense of a small community or "family" within the school system as restructuring efforts changed the dynamics of the classroom. In response to this need, most teachers sought a collaborative partner in teaching. These teaching "teams" yielded a variety of classroom structures: single grade multi-age classrooms, multi-year programs in which two teachers alternated grade levels so they could team teach and keep a class for two years, single grade two teacher teams, multi-grade two teacher teams, along with some more "traditional" arrangements. Special educators became members of teams as consultants, teachers, and collaborative planners.

■ Conclusion

When we began our journey, full inclusion seemed to be about the placement of children with disabilities in general education classes. We soon learned that full inclusion is about school change, about enhancing our capacity to deal with diversity, and doing so in a manner that respects the rights and maintains the dignity of all. As we continue our journey, new strategies will emerge as our experiences inform us. Our challenge is to continue to embrace that which has promise and discard that which does not. Our willingness to do so is what makes us a community of learners.

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Building an Inclusive High School Community

by John Emerson and M. Lewis Putnam

Collaboration among general and special educators has been viewed as critical to the success of students with special needs being served in inclusive schools and classrooms. As greater numbers of students with special learning needs receive all or part of their education in general education classrooms, the importance of effective, systematic teacher collaboration becomes all the more evident.

Collaborative teaming, as used in promoting full community membership of all students, is a continuous, interactive process that enables general and special education teachers, administrators, and support staff with diverse expertise to generate creative solutions to mutually defined, student-focused issues. Through systematic collaborative teaming, general and special educators are able to enhance the lines of communication regarding student learning outcomes, methods of instruction, materials modification, and curricular adaptations. This is essential to the successful integration and inclusion of students who have special learning and support needs.

When Eastlake High School in Redmond, Washington, opened its doors in 1993, the intent was to create a high school community where all staff members would collaborate, share responsibilities and resources, and work together toward achieving Eastlake's vision of inclusion: that all students have the opportunity to participate and be supported in a full array of academic, vocational, and social opportunities, and be valued as contributing members of the school community. To make this vision a reality, collaborative teams have evolved. These teams can be viewed as functioning at three different levels: (1) instruction and support, (2) curricula and program planning, and (3) school policy and operations. These levels are not mutually exclusive; they overlap and support and enhance the effectiveness of one another.

■ Instruction and Support

Collaboration at the instruction and support level takes many forms. These include various staff members participating in team teaching; serving on guidance, IEP and transition teams; coordinating support programs like peer tutoring; and providing consultation to other teachers. The following are three examples from the school of teaming efforts at the instruction and support level:

- **Consultation Teaming**. At the beginning of the new quarter, Steve, the IEP manager assigned to the science area, meets with the integrated science teacher of one of his students with an IEP. They discuss curriculum expectations, material modifications, grading issues, instructional accommodations, and support systems. This is the student's first ever regular science class. She is anxious about the class, the teacher's expectations, and her chances of being successful. Several weeks into the quarter, the science teacher asks Steve for assistance concerning an upcoming project for which students are to build three virus models. Steve and the science teacher discuss the student's progress, strengths and challenges, and ability to complete the project to established evaluation criteria. They decide that she will make one model instead of the assigned three, and that her final project grade will be determined jointly by Steve and the science teacher based in part on IEP established criteria.

- **Team Teaching**. Brett, an IEP manager, and Jill, the Principles of Technology teacher, have been team teaching the Principles of Technology class since Eastlake opened. Six to eight students with disabilities are usually enrolled in this popular class. Jill has major responsibility for curricular planning while Brett assumes primary responsibility for student evaluation and grading, curriculum modifications, and instructional adaptations. They trade-off on the labs, based on interest and knowledge level. Jill and Brett describe their team teaching style as "tag team teaching." It is built on a commitment to listen and to respect each other's teaching strengths and styles. This team teaching model has resulted in the successful inclusion of students traditionally served in separate classrooms.

- **Transition Planning Teaming**. Andrea, the Career Center specialist, Joyce, the Business Department's work experience coordinator, and George, an IEP manager, meet to discuss a student's transition plan and community job placement. Andrea and Joyce suggest a vocational interest assessment prior to their next meeting with the student and his parents. At this meeting, the assessment results are discussed and they agree upon three job areas. After locating an opportunity at a local supermarket, Joyce again meets with George to discuss the job requirements and monitoring responsibilities. Joyce will evaluate the student's work performance while George will focus on his completion of the "workplace journal" and work-related instruction back at school.

As can be seen in these vignettes, the roles and responsibilities of general and special education teachers have dramatically changed from more traditional models. The isolated resource room teacher, providing parallel content instruction for a small group of students with IEPs in a pull-out type program, has been replaced by a highly collaborative model.

The roles and responsibilities of the special education

teachers at Eastlake have changed most dramatically. For example, during the 1994-95 school year, four special education teachers provided support and IEP management for 62 special needs students. These teachers also had direct responsibility for at least one general education class. In order to determine these new roles and responsibilities, a careful review of class enrollment patterns and the support needs of all students with disabilities occurs each semester. From this analysis, the special education teachers are able to provide an array of collaborative focused services across content areas, including the following:

- **Team Teaching**. A general and special education teacher jointly plan and teach a regular content class.
- **Support**. A special education teacher provides ongoing support and specialized instruction to one or more students with an IEP in a general education class.
- **Consultation**. A special education teacher meets regularly with assigned general education teachers in a content area to review student progress and suggest curricular adaptations, instructional modifications, and evaluation options.
- **Monitoring**. A special education teacher continually monitors the progress of assigned students in a general education class and meets with the students one-on-one to discuss progress.
- **Special Class Instruction**. A special or general education teacher provides specialized instruction such as study skills, self-determination, reading, mathematics, or social skills to a small group of students.

These services are provided on a daily basis, as shown in the sample schedule in Table 1 (see page 21).

■ Curricular and Program Planning

Collaboration at the curricular and program planning level consists of teacher teams planning the various programs offered at Eastlake and developing curriculum in various content areas. One example of this kind of innovative collaboration is the Special Issues and Options Team (SIOT). It consists of five general education teachers, three special educators, and two administrators. One teacher from each content area is present to assure that collaborative planning is grounded in general education curriculum and instructional issues. The SIOT meets every two weeks to discuss and plan for the effective inclusion of all students, providing schoolwide leadership in defining an inclusion-focused curriculum planning process and instructional support system that fit the context of Eastlake's ongoing restructuring efforts. The team also meets every summer for several days to review how well students with disabilities are being included in all aspects of the Eastlake community. A comprehensive school-based staff development plan is formulated annually based on teacher needs identified through surveys, focus groups, and team member discussions with colleagues. Extensive student achievement data is also collected and reviewed regularly, including academic, social, career/vocational, and transition measures.

This collaborative process has been important as special education teachers have an ongoing dialogue with content area teachers, and content area teachers have a direct link to the special education staff who can provide a variety of individualized support and small group assistance. Some of this year's SIOT agenda items have included the need to teach students self-determination skills with the review of several exemplary curricula; the development of an after-school teacher workshop focusing on grading and evaluation issues; reviews of extracurricular participation rates of students; and the design of a follow-along questionnaire for all students who have exited Eastlake. These collaborative efforts, which focus on student success by a team of general and special education teachers, have resulted in significant progress in developing a unified, inclusive system of instruction.

■ School Policy and Operations

The third level of collaborative activities at Eastlake focuses on school policy and operations. Examples of such collaboration include the Area Coordinators Team and the SIOT. The Area Coordinators Team consists of one representative from each core content area and special education. They discuss a wide range of topics at their weekly meeting such as budgets, curriculum support, scheduling, teaching assignments, and staffing issues. The inclusion of special education on this team has been critical to ensuring that school policy and operations decisions consider the needs of all students, especially those with disabilities. The following is an example of area coordinator teaming at Eastlake:

- At an Area Coordinators Team meeting, Brett, the special services area coordinator, comments on the difficulty special education teachers are having in obtaining comprehensive lists of class projects and their due dates from teachers across content areas. He describes how important this information is to the five special education teachers as they monitor student progress and work with teachers on needed accommodations or project adaptations. Following the meeting, the area coordinators share this concern with their area teachers, and at the next team meeting the coordinators suggest development of a project monitoring form that students will have each of their teachers complete. It is proposed that students review their forms, which detail due dates, expectations, and grading criteria, with their IEP teacher on a weekly basis. The team agrees to try this approach, and review its effectiveness at a later meeting.

■ Implications

Although general and special education teachers col-

High School, continued on page 21

Youth Leadership for Equity and Excellence in Schools

by Carol Tashie, Cheryl Jorgensen, Jill Martin, Joanne Malloy, Susan Shapiro-Barnard, and Mary Schuh

Throughout New Hampshire and the country, students with and without disabilities have taken the lead in ensuring that our schools and communities truly embrace – in spirit and practice – the essence of equity and excellence for all. Imagine the following scenarios:

- As part of the school's advisory system, small groups of students meet weekly with their teacher/advisor. Today, the students are using a cooperative problem solving strategy to brainstorm ideas on how to support one student, who happens to have disabilities, during math class. After the meeting is over, several students gather to discuss ways in which this strategy could be used to solve other school and student issues. The students ask their advisor if they can lead a problem-solving session every week to support other students with any issues that might arise.
- Every year, the New Hampshire Department of Education awards $200,000 in discretionary grants to middle and high schools interested in developing innovative projects. In the spring, the review committee meets to debate the merits of the proposals and to grant funds accordingly. Representatives from local public schools and institutions of higher education, family members, and students, all of whom have strong feelings about the strengths and weaknesses of certain proposals, sit at the table. A high school student who had spent 10 years in segregated schools persuades the group to fully fund a proposal that supports students with significant disabilities to attend college.
- The high school community council is meeting to discuss the impact of the new block schedule on students and faculty at the school. The council, which is the governing body of the school, is composed of students, faculty, administrators, and community members. At this meeting, students present their views on how the new 4-by-4 schedule is meeting the needs of students in the school and offer suggestions on how faculty can better accommodate the learning styles of the student population.

What do these three scenarios have in common? They are examples of ways in which New Hampshire schools are striving for equity and excellence for all students, as well as how students with and without disabilities are taking a leading role in proposing, implementing, and monitoring necessary changes.

■ Students as Leaders

Reforming the ways in which schools educate all students requires the collaboration and respect of everyone involved. Educators, families, community members, and students must work together to ensure that changes are made that will support the needs of all students to be successful now and in the future. In the past, much educational reform occurred without the input of perhaps the most important players – the students. Today, many schools have recognized the need not only to include students in restructuring efforts, but also to support students to take the lead. What follows are several examples of how New Hampshire students with and without disabilities are leading the way in reforming schools.

Students as Advocates

A common complaint about the "youth of today" is that they lack the passion and commitment of the youth of past generations. Many New Hampshire students are demonstrating the inaccuracy of this perception. Having been educated in schools that practice inclusive education, these students are leading the way to ensure that their schools and communities embrace, value, and support their peers who have disabilities. Student advocacy occurs in many different ways. One group of students has undertaken a campaign to make local businesses accessible to people with physical disabilities. Another group of students staged a protest when one of their classmates was denied entrance into a second floor classroom. A third group of students met with the school's transportation supervisor to demand equal transportation for one of their friends. Students throughout the state are making their voices heard, and as a result of their advocacy, schools and communities are examining their beliefs and practices about the inclusion of all students.

Students as Policymakers

In the past, the closest students ever got to school governance was through participation in the student council. Today, in New Hampshire, students are taking leadership roles in policymaking at both the local and state levels. Students serve on many of the advisory boards and task forces that deal with issues that affect themselves and their classmates. For example, as members of the Task Force for the Improvement of Secondary Education and the School-to-Work Committee, students are involved in the allocation of grant funds to local school districts. Students are being recognized as key stakeholders in education and are beginning to be listened to when policy decisions are made.

Students as Educators

No longer are students simply learners; they are also teachers of the subjects that are important to them. At one

national education conference, New Hampshire students gave a presentation on how equity and excellence can work in schools. At another conference, a New Hampshire student gave a keynote address that contrasted his experiences in both segregated and inclusive education. Groups of students are sought after to teach families, teachers, and other students about friendship and belonging. Students are also teaching teachers how to become more effective at conveying knowledge and information. Several students from one high school worked with their teacher to develop and teach a summer course on innovative science curriculum at an out-of-state university. Students have embraced the role of educators and schools have become richer as a result.

Students as Curriculum Consultants

Educators nationwide are examining ways in which the transition from school to adult living for students with disabilities can be most effective. In New Hampshire, schools are looking at ways that all students can be supported to make informed choices about their present lives and future goals. Several school administrators have asked high school students to help them develop courses and curricula to support all students as they move through high school and into adulthood. These schools have supported diverse groups of students to participate in off-campus retreats resulting in student-developed and student-centered career and life planning processes for the schools. Students have presented their ideas to fellow students, administrators, and school boards and, in one school, have written a curriculum guide to be used in all advisory classes.

Students Supporting Students

The old adage "teacher knows best" is being challenged in many schools as adults are acknowledging that, in many cases, the people best suited to support students are their classmates. Advisory classes, once thought of as adults supporting students, are now used as opportunities for students to support one another. Students are putting their heads together to solve important issues that affect individual students and the entire school system. In New Hampshire, students have assisted one another in issues relating to inclusion (why one student is not welcomed in certain classes; the inequalities of the tracking system), friendship (supporting an individual student to become better connected; redefining the Peer Outreach system), and curriculum (developing and piloting new courses). Students are clear in their desire to support their classmates and are demonstrating great skill and sensitivity in solving the issues that concern them.

Students as Learners

While some people believe that real leaders are "born and not made," it is generally agreed that leadership requires knowledge and skills. To that end, there are many local and statewide efforts underway to provide students with opportunities to develop and refine their leadership abilities. For example, the statewide Youth Leadership Series brought together 40 students for five days of intensive training on best practices in collaboration, community organizing, inclusion, and systems change. National presenters with expertise in social justice issues have met with students to provide information and strategies on affecting change in their schools and communities. Individual schools have responded to the voices of students and have embedded information on advocacy, inclusion, and equality into existing classes and curriculum. One school is exploring the addition of American Sign Language into its foreign language department.

On an individual level, students are pursuing additional knowledge in a wide variety of subjects related to leadership. Several students have held apprenticeships in the state capital with policymakers and government leaders. A college student is visiting classrooms in a variety of towns to learn more about educational practices that will support all students as learners. One high school student is participating in a six-day professional seminar to gain information on enhancing supports for students with disabilities in his school. As students are learning more about the issues that concern them most, they are using the knowledge and skills gained to make meaningful changes in their schools and communities.

■ Conclusion

The students of today will become the educators, parents, policymakers, and business leaders of the future. They will be the people who will right our wrongs and refine our ideals. Today, youth are teaching teachers, families, and administrators what they want their schools to look like and are taking the lead in making many of the necessary changes. If we continue to support all students in their leadership roles, we will begin to see true equity and excellence, now and in the future.

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Together We're Better: Statewide Systems Change

by Laura Medwetz and John Sauer

The Together We're Better Program began four years ago with a desire to approach the development of inclusive school communities in a systemic manner. Typically, we approach decision-making in our schools through only one frame of reference...our own, be that the perspective of a teacher, administrator, support person, parent, student, or community member. We usually do not view each decision within the context of a system. In a systems approach, the organization as a whole and its members individually examine and evaluate practices, structures, processes and policies within the system in order to bring about long-lasting change.

The five-year Together We're Better Program is a collaborative effort of the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning, and the Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota, funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Its mission is the development of a single educational system that supports the membership, participation, and learning of all students. It is carrying out that mission through collaborative partnerships and networking with Minnesota school districts, parent advocacy organizations, and institutes of higher education.

Specific activities of the project fall into six areas:

- **District Partnerships**. Partnerships have been established with four school districts across the state (Owatonna, Chaska, Crookston, and Moorhead) for the purpose of building more inclusive school communities through broad systemic change. The program works with the districts to support progress toward their vision of an inclusive system by identifying goals, developing and implementing strategies, and evaluating the outcomes.
- **Personnel Preparation/Development.** The program has identified critical teacher and administrator competencies, values, and beliefs required to promote equity and create community in schools with diverse populations and unique learner needs. The results have been shared with personnel in Minnesota institutes of higher education as well as with the Minnesota Board of Teaching.
- **Inclusion Mentorship Program**. In addition to the four school districts that are partners with the program, ten districts have teams comprised of general and special educators, administrators, and parents who act as a regional resource to schools and families interested in the development of inclusive school communities. The program provides training and technical assistance for the teams.
- **Statewide Training**. The program has sponsored training events that provide information to educators and families on the development of inclusive school communities. The training events include an annual summer institute attended by the districts with which the program collaborates.
- **Family Leadership**. The program, in collaboration with parent advocacy organizations and school districts, has conducted a needs assessment of families, identifying their support and information needs. The results have guided training initiatives, informational materials, and the development of networking opportunities.
- **Inclusive Education Products**. The Together We're Better Program is developing informational materials to support the efforts of schools in developing inclusive school communities, including: *Systems Thinking Approaches and Strategies for Developing Inclusive School Communities*; *Defining Roles and Responsibilities Within Teams in Inclusive School Communities; Curricular Strategies at the Secondary Level*; and *The Implications of "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People "(by Stephen Covey) in Our Schools*. These will be available in 1997.

The impact of the program, which is entering its final year, can be seen through the changes experienced in participating districts. Paul Molestre, Director of Special Services from Owatonna Public Schools, which is one of the participating districts, comments on the progress he has seen:

> I can remember in a vivid and sometimes painful manner, when inclusive education was something that we implemented because of parental pressure and the threat of litigation. What a dramatic and positive change to think that we are now making educational decisions based on our vision, values, and knowledge of what is best for kids rather than what is most convenient or what has been past practice. And to think that this inclusive perspective now extends to other students representing diversity in our population (gifted students, limited English proficient students, etc.) is most gratifying. The systems change project has helped us develop this perspective on a district-wide basis.

A systems approach, such as that used in Together We're Better, supports schools in their continuing journey toward inclusive school communities. The broadened perspective offered by systems thinking creates many new partnerships, collaboratives, and coalitions, which results in long-term benefits for students, schools, families, and communities.

Laura Medwetz and John Saurer are Coordinators with the Together We're Better Program, Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. They may be reached at 612/624-1349.

Zero Exclusion: Keeping Students in School

by Martha L. Thurlow, Mary F. Sinclair, and Sandra L. Christenson

The school restructuring efforts of today are driven by a desire to improve the performance of schools and the students in them. Toward this end, there have been reforms in requirements, expectations, and school policies, including those focusing on student behavior. Suspensions, zero tolerance policies, and an array of other reforms are prevalent, particularly in secondary schools. The most extreme form of exclusion, where students are "pushed" out of school, is a real danger in current school restructuring efforts.

School dropouts are one of America's most challenging problems – a problem that has gained such importance that it has been targeted in Goal 2 of our national education goals. *Pushouts* are among those students no longer attending school, and may actually be more prevalent among dropouts than students who have left school for reasons such as employment or pregnancy. Students with disabilities are among those most likely to drop out or be pushed out. Unless specific efforts are made to address the dropout problem for all students, school restructuring has the potential to become a mechanism for producing poor (or worse) outcomes for many students not performing well in academic settings.

Contrary to commonly held beliefs, students who drop out of school usually do so after several years of growing alienation from school – a process that is usually abetted by the school system and professionals within the system. Dropping out of school has significant negative consequences for nearly all students, but particularly for students with disabilities. Dropouts are unemployed at rates more than 40% higher than youth who complete school, and dropouts who find employment earn an average of $6000 less per year than graduates. Arrest rates for dropouts are alarming, reaching as high as 73% for those with emotional and behavioral disabilities.

As schools engage in restructuring, it is essential that they factor in what is known about keeping youth in school. Over the past three years, three projects – ALAS in Los Angeles, Belief Academy in Seattle, and Check and Connect in Minneapolis - have collaborated in identifying key elements of successful dropout prevention for students with learning and emotional/behavioral disabilities. There are many reasons to believe that the same approaches will work effectively with other students as well, particularly those with challenging behaviors. Although in different parts of the country, and comprised of somewhat different populations of students, the three projects identified the following as essential strategies for retaining the most challenging students:

- **Monitoring**. Continuous tracking of each student in terms of occurrence of risk behaviors (absences, course failures, problem behaviors, etc.) and timely interventions used to alleviate risk behaviors or reactions to them.
- **Relationships**. An adult or other person in the school building a relationship with the student that demonstrates respect, caring, and interest in the student, while also continually communicating the importance of school.
- **Affiliation**. Promoting the student's connection to the school and sense of belonging to the community of students and staff.
- **Problem Solving**. Developing in each student the skills needed to resolve conflicts more constructively, in ways that improve the student's life.
- **Persistence, Continuity, and Consistency**. Highly related elements that convey that someone is always there for the student, over time, and always with the same message – stay in school.

When the three projects merged their data regarding the effectiveness of the strategies listed above, they confirmed significant effects related to enrollment in school and progress toward graduation, two key indicators that students are on track and will stay in school. For example, in terms of enrollment in school, 89% of students with whom the interventions were used remained in school through the ninth grade (the 1994-95 school year) compared to only 77% of comparison group students. In terms of their progress toward graduation (credits earned at the end of ninth grade), 56% of those involved in the intervention were on track to graduate in four years, compared to only 29% of comparison students. Furthermore, 78% of intervention students were on track to graduate in five years, compared to only 49% of the comparison group.

Although it is possible for individual staff members within a school to provide these essential strategies for a student, restructured schools have the unique opportunity to ensure that all staff engage in practices that promote students' engagement in school. Schools that demonstrate these essential dropout prevention strategies in all they do are schools that promote a systemic awareness and expression of the philosophy of inclusion.

Martha L. Thurlow, Mary F. Sinclair, and Sandra L. Christenson are Project Directors of the Check and Connect Dropout Prevention Project at the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. For further information on the project contact Mary at 612/624-4335. *For complete findings, see resource list on page 9.*

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Resources

The following resources are related to the restructuring of schools and practices in a way that supports full inclusion of students with disabilities. Please contact the distributors listed for information about ordering the materials and for costs.

■ Books

- **Inclusive and Heterogeneous Education: Assessment, Curriculum, and Instruction** (1995). By M. Falvey. A description of many practical strategies and examples for including students with moderate to severe disabilities in general education settings. Published by Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company, Baltimore • 800/638-3775.
- **Cooperative Teaching: Rebuilding the Schoolhouse for All Students** (1995). By J. Bauwens and J. Hourcade. A practical text about general and special educators joining together to share instructional responsibilities for all students. Published by Pro-Ed, Austin, Texas • 512/451-3246.
- **Creating an Inclusive School** (1995). By R. Villa and J. Thousand (Eds.). A comprehensive resource on the foundations of inclusion and promising practices in K-12 schools. Published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, Virginia • 703/549-9110.
- **Team Building for School Change: Equipping Teachers for New Roles** (1993). By G.I. Maeroff. A discussion of team-building as a method to help teachers improve as professionals, equipping them to bring about changes on behalf of students. Chapters focus on setting a climate for team building, selecting teams, bonding and growing as a team, the principal's role on the team, making time for teams, obstacles to teams, and team building in the long-run. Published by Teachers College Press, Colchester, Vermont • 800/445-6638.
- **Collaboration Handbook for Educators Working Toward Inclusion of Special Needs Students** (1995). By L. Chalmers and M. Olson. A discussion of the value of collaboration along with skills and strategies needed for successful collaboration. Published by Practical Press, Moorhead, Minnesota • 218/233-2842.
- **Toward Inclusive Classrooms** (1994). By M. Dalheim (Ed.). A compilation of six specific examples of how teachers across the country are trying to incorporate more inclusive practices into their schools. Each example is written by the teachers involved. Comprehensive explanations are provided about all aspects of each teacher's and school's work, providing sufficient details so that other teachers and schools can use the information as a starting point. Published by NEA Professional Library, West Haven, Connecticut • 800/229-4200.
- **Interactions: Collaboration Skills for School Professionals** (1992). By M. Friend and L. Cook. Information on the development and use of skills needed for effective professional collaboration, including team meetings and ongoing communication and problem-solving with parents and colleagues. Published by Longman Publishing Group, Addison Wesley Publishing, Reading, Massachusetts • 800/447-2226.

■ Manuals, Reports

- **Winning Ways: Creating Inclusive Schools, Classrooms and Communities** (1995). By V. Roach, et al. A report examining the implementation of inclusion from a variety of perspectives, including those of teachers, parents, district and school administrators, and policymakers. Published by National Association of State Boards of Education, Alexandria, Virginia • 800/220-5183.
- **How Are We Doing: A Review Process for Evaluating Teams Which Are Working in Inclusive Settings** (1992). By L. Davern, A. Ford, J. Marusa, and R.F. Schnorr. A review process for teams to use to discuss the question, "How are we doing as a team?" The process can be used several times each year, and can result in constructive discussion about what's working and what needs improvement. Published by The Inclusive Education Project, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York • 315/443-1881.

■ Training/Curricula

- **Creating Inclusive School Communities: A Staff Development Series for General and Special Educators** (1996). By J. York-Barr, R. Kronberg, and M.E. Doyle. A five module series focusing on creating meaningful individualized curricula and effective collaborative teams. Published by Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Baltimore • 800/638-3775.
- **The Power of 2: Making a Difference Through Co-Teaching** (1995). By M. Friend and L. Cook. A videotape providing an in-depth understanding of the potential of co-teaching as a service delivery system in schools with an inclusive school philosophy. When combined with activities suggested in the facilitator's guide, the package can provide a solid foundation for the development or enhancement of a co-teaching program. Available from CASE Research Committee, Smith Research Center, Indiana University, Bloomington • 812/855-5090.

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laborate on a daily basis at Eastlake, staff members still face many challenges. These include continually defining their specific roles and responsibilities, finding sufficient planning and meeting time, communicating effectively with other staff members, delivering instructional accommodations to students and teachers in a timely manner, implementing a well-defined system for evaluating and grading students, and effectively presenting staff development opportunities. A general educator and a special educator who team teach a Humanities class have articulated what they believe to be the key elements to successful collaboration:

- A compatible level of academic and behavioral expectations by all staff members.
- All staff taking responsibility for student success.
- Student perception that all teachers are supporting them, not just the special education teachers.
- Establishment and continual review of clear definitions of roles and responsibilities.
- Clear articulation and understanding regarding expected student outcomes.
- A willingness to honestly communicate concerning what is the best for each individual student.

These elements seem in place in this last example in which the guidance team meets to discuss a new Eastlake student:

- A student's Algebra and Humanities teachers bring to the Guidance Team meeting their concerns that the student is having difficulty adjusting to the classes. She inappropriately seeks out adult attention, is overly dependent on teacher assistance, and is afraid to initiate independent work. Her IEP Manager describes the self-contained junior high school setting she has recently moved from and asks questions about her progress to date. The team decides to develop a seven-step plan to address her behaviors, and present it to the student's parent for review and modification. Following approval by her parents, a final plan is agreed upon and communicated to all her teachers. In the plan, a peer tutor is assigned to work with the student in two classes, and the student is taught to ask for teacher assistance and assignment clarification in appropriate ways. The consistent implementation and continuous monitoring of this plan throughout the day by all her teachers results in new academic and social opportunities for the student.

Table 1: Special Education Teachers Daily Schedule

Teacher	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5	Period 6
1.0 FTE .6 sp ed .4 reg ed	*Support* Integrated Science	*Team Teaching* Humanities Block		*Support* Integrated Science	Prep/Monitoring	Independent Study Skills
1.0 FTE .8 sp ed .2 reg ed	*Support* Math Skills/ Algebra	Prep/ Monitoring	Senior Connections (English)	*Consultation* Geometry	*Team Teaching* Humanities Block	
1.0 FTE .8 sp ed .2 reg ed	Prep/ Monitoring	*Team Teaching* Principles of Technology	Team Sports (PE)	*Team Teaching* Principles of Technology	*Team Teaching* Algebra	*Consultation* Algebra Independent Study Skills
1.0 FTE .8 sp ed .2 reg ed	*Consultation* Geometry	*Team Teaching* Algebra	"Jump Start" Study Skills - Language Arts	Independent Study -Language Arts	*Consultation* Geometry	Prep/Monitoring

Collaborative teaming is a very powerful educational strategy that is making a real difference in the lives of students and teachers. As schools seek new ways to prepare all students for full community membership, teachers must take the lead in forging new working relationships. Breaking from past practices requires difficult collective, collaborative work by the total school community. Together, general and special education can help create classrooms, schools, and communities where all students find success and satisfaction.

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Habits, continued from page 1

effective. The seventh habit is concerned with the ongoing renewal of an individual, recognizing the fact that time and energy must be given to a person's physical, mental, spiritual, and social/emotional well-being to ensure effectiveness on a long-term basis.

The three to be elaborated upon in this article are *Be Proactive; Begin With the End in Mind; and Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood*. These have been particularly useful in educational restructuring efforts.

■ Habit 1: Be Proactive

Simply stated, Habit 1 says that one *always* has choices. Proactive people recognize that fact and consciously choose their response to any situation. In contrast, reactive people see themselves as powerless, victims of circumstances with no recourse except to wait for someone else to fix the problem or remove the obstacles. In discussing proactivity, Covey emphasizes the importance of recognizing those things in life that are within one's *circle of influence* and those that are within one's *circle of concern*. Issues within one's circle of influence are the things over which one has some direct control and about which one can do something. Issues within a person's circle of concern are things that concern an individual, but over which one does not have any direct control. Proactive people choose to focus on items within their circle of influence, with the result typically being that their circle of influence expands. Reactive individuals focus on their circle of concern, resulting in paralysis because they are focused on things over which they currently have no influence. Reactive individuals frequently attribute blame to people and conditions external to themselves. A final dimension of proactivity is recognition that often one cannot control life events, but can control one's reaction.

The application of this habit in education settings may be seen through the example of an elementary classroom teacher provided the opportunity to visit a neighboring district as part of a staff development educational exchange program. The elementary school he visits works very hard to include children with disabilities in general education classrooms and provide the support necessary to meet their needs in that setting. The visiting teacher is energized by this concept and sees benefits for all children and adults in a school community. He returns to the school where he teaches and, at a staff meeting, presents a report of his educational exchange visit. The response to the idea of including children with disabilities in general education classrooms is a barrage of objections: "It costs too much; how could we possibly do that?...I have no training; I don't think you understand the very special needs that these children have... The needs of those children could never be addressed in a regular classroom." If the teacher responded reactively, he would focus on all the concerns that were raised, with the attitude that until those issues are all resolved there is nothing that he can do to support a more inclusive school community. If however, he responds proactively, he might request that some of the fifth grade age students with disabilities be placed in his fifth grade classroom; he might participate in the IEP meetings to insure that adequate support is provided and he has a good understanding of a child's unique needs; and he might give updates at staff meetings to share successes and concerns and invite follow-up conversations with anyone interested in learning more or helping to solve some of the issues.

As you read this example, did you sense a difference in how the teacher would feel about himself and his work in the two scenarios? Is it also apparent that by being proactive, his chances of enlarging his circle of influence related to this issue will grow?

■ Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind

Habit 2 encourages people to develop their own personal mission statement, which simply means thinking about what they want to accomplish throughout their lives and how they want to be toward others. An essential part of a personal mission statement is that it encompasses all aspects of life that are important to an individual and does not focus on just one facet such as vocation. There are always many opportunities to learn new things and get involved in activities and projects. However, saying yes to all these opportunities leads to not doing anything very well. A second consequence of saying yes to every opportunity in one area of life, such as work, is saying no to other important aspects of life, such as family and friends. The essence of Habit 2 is summarized in the following quote from Covey: "It is easy to say no when there is a deeper yes burning within." The "deeper yes" is one's personal mission statement.

In an educational setting, the impact of a mission statement can be illustrated in the experience of a principal of a middle school who has worked very hard with the staff, families, and students to articulate a mission statement and develop related goals and action plans for the next three years. This strategic plan is not only a goal of the district for each school, but it is also a personal goal of the principal related to her mission statement focus on being an effective leader and involving all parties in decision-making that affects their lives. Several months after the completion of the school's strategic planning, the assistant superintendent comes to this principal and asked her to commit her school as a pilot site for a new science curriculum the district wants to explore. This request does not align with the priority goals articulated at the middle school. The principal's response is, therefore, that the science curriculum sounds very exciting and worthwhile; however, unless the school community agrees to consider this option and makes it a priority over goals to which they previously agreed, they will have to decline the opportunity. Such a response may not have entered the principal's mind had she not articulated for herself a "deeper yes". Having a "deeper yes" made it easier to say no respectfully and with well-reasoned rationale.

■ Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood

This habit is one of the most important tenants of effective communication and probably the most under-utilized. Habit 5 suggests that effective communication requires first an understanding of the other person. After checking to be sure that, in fact, one's understanding of the other person's perspective is accurate, one can then communicate his or her own perspective. Covey refers to this as *empathic listening*, as opposed to *autobiographical listening*. Autobiographical listening is listening with the intent to reply and add one's own perspective. It may include statements that evaluate what someone else has said, interpret their communication, give unsolicited advice, or ask questions as a prelude to evaluating, interpreting, or advising. Most people listen with the intent to reply. In contrast, an empathic listener would desire to understand the other person, be willing to be influenced by them, and utilize the skills of reflecting both the content and feeling of what a person has said back to them as a way to insure understanding.

An example of empathic listening can be found in an interaction between a teacher and inclusion facilitator. The third grade teacher (Renee) has been teaching for 20 years and will have a student (Lynn) with significant mental and physical disabilities in her classroom for the first time next year. The student's case manager (Sue) is an inclusion facilitator for the elementary school and was formerly the teacher in a self-contained special education classroom in the building. Renee has just learned that Lynn is on her class list next year and that a meeting is scheduled in two weeks to plan for Lynn's membership in the third grade. The following conversation is an illustration of Sue listening to Renee in a manner that demonstrates "seek first to understand":

Renee: Hi, Sue. Do you have a minute?

Sue: Sure, come on in!

Renee: You know, I've been teaching for 20 years, but lately the demands are snowballing. I've just had it!

Sue: It sounds like you're feeling frustrated with your job.

Renee: Well, there is always something, but the idea of having Lynn in my room next year is the last straw. What could I possibly teach her? And who is going to attend to all of her physical needs? It's ridiculous.

Sue: It sounds like you feel overwhelmed and unsure about the idea of meeting Lynn's needs in your classroom.

Renee: You bet! I have to teach language arts, social studies, science, math, and art. I don't think those subjects make sense for Lynn who can't speak, or read, or write, or do any of the things needed to learn those subjects.

Sue: So your classroom is a mismatch for Lynn's needs?

Renee: Well, yes, although I really don't know her needs.

Sue: Would be helpful to learn a little bit about Lynn?

Renee: Well, yes, I mean, here I am, about to have a student enter my room and I have no idea what or how to teach her and I'm the teacher!

Sue: So you're feeling this huge sense of responsibility and also feeling scared that you won't know what to do.

Renee: That's it exactly! So what can I do?

Sue: Well, Lynn is in Carl's class this year. You might want to spend some time in there, observing her, interacting with her, and also talking with Carl, and Judy, the classroom assistant, and with Lynn's classmates.

Renee: But there's only one of me to go around. No one is going to have time to take my class so I can do that.

Sue: So you would really like to spend time in second grade with Lynn, but you feel like asking anyone to take your class during that time is too much to ask?

Renee: Yes. Do you have any suggestions?

Sue: I'd love to work with you supporting your class so that you can spend time in second grade. It will also be helpful for me to begin getting a better handle on third grade curriculum so that I'll be able to work more effectively with you next year in meeting Lynn's needs.

Imagine what the conversation might have sounded like had Sue attempted to evaluate what Renee was sharing ("You're just stressed out because it is the end of the school year"), or interpreted Renee's feelings and provided advice based upon that interpretation (" I used to think it would never work either, but it will, you just need to relax and give it some time"). Not only would Renee have felt devalued, she would have received no support and felt more overwhelmed, a very different outcome.

■ Conclusion

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People does not provide magical formulas or give quick-fix solutions. However, the habits do provide guidance about how to sort through the overwhelming number of "opportunities" faced by educators today, focus on those that align with a personal or organizational mission, channel energy into areas one can influence, and communicate and work more effectively with others. Taking the time to learn about and practice the habits can have a tremendous impact on one's ability to accomplish the very important tasks of being an effective educator and an effective human being.

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Reference: Covey, S.R. (1989). *The 7 habits of highly effective people*. New York: Fireside.

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